

GERMANY
(PRE-WAR)

PRE-WAR GERMANY - INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORTATION

A. POLICIES

1. The German policy was to foster the construction of waterways as a practical means of combatting unemployment, of providing efficient and cheap means of transportation of low-cost bulk commodities, and, following the dictum laid down by von Moltke in 1875, or forming an alternate transport system capable of relieving the railways in time of war. Even before the Third Reich, Germany owned an extensive and well-kept system of waterways. The Nazis wished to expand and revive water transportation not only for its potential usefulness in the German industry, but for the needs of total war. By increasing the capacity of the Dortmund-Ems canal and the terminal port of Emden, a valuable alternative all-German route was provided between the heavy industries of Rhenish Westphalia and the sea. The completion of the Mittelland canal in 1938 met the long-felt need of a link between the hitherto separate eastern and western waterway systems. The increase of port facilities, rationalization, and a radical series of administrative reforms were to establish facilities that might relieve the Reichsbahn of the maximum tonnage of commercial goods, thereby increasing the latter's capacity for the transport of troops and military goods for which speedy transport was essential.
2. Under the Minister, the Secretary of State for Railroads was also in charge of the two departments concerned with inland navigation: the Department of Administration and Inland Shipping, to which was attached a Group for National Defense; and the Department of Waterways, to which was attached a special group for administration and legal affairs.
4. The costs of the building and maintenance of the inland waterways system were borne entirely by the municipal, state and national authorities. There was no appreciable subsidy of individual shipping concerns, because, as will be shown, the German policy was to keep to a minimum the number of such concerns while at the same time expanding the waterway net. In the worst of the depression, under the Brüning administration, 20% to 50% subsidies on construction costs were given to 5,206 firms, with 13 million RM given to the shippers and 3 million RM to the ship builders. The payment of interest on debts was temporarily cancelled. The law of April 25, 1932 gave the Minister of Transport the right to eliminate shipping he considered unnecessary. The Nazis continued the policy of restriction until 1936 when the tax on the transportation of freight was abolished. Because of the handicraft characteristics of much of German inland shipping, there was no Nazi attempt at nationalization.
5. Refer to Railway Transportation A. 5.

B. ORGANIZATION

1. See Railway Transportation, B. 1,2,3,4,5.

The "Inland Shipping" Division (Abteilung Binnenschifffahrt) of the Ministry of Transport controlled the general affairs of inland

PRE-WAR GERMANY - INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORTATION (B-1 CONT'D)

shipping, especially policy, economic research, collection of statistics, and personnel matters, although the actual administrative work was carried out by subordinate agencies.

2. The Department of Administration and Inland Shipping, (see A-2) was concerned with general affairs of inland shipping; policy, economic research, collection of statistics, and personnel. It also supervised the work of the Transport Groups composed of private and public enterprises in the inland shipping industry. The Department of Waterways was in charge of planning, construction, and maintenance of waterways. Regionally this control was established by means of Waterways Directorates, and locally by Waterways Officers which were subordinate to the Directorates. Other duties of the Waterways Department involved the promotion of security in shipping, ice clearance, and the establishment and maintenance of signals, buoys and other navigational aids.

All carriers were organized in a quasi-public body, with representation from the private shipping industry, the Reich Government and the National Socialist Party, called the Reich Transport Group for Inland Shipping (Reichsverkehrsgruppe-Binnenschifffahrt). This corporate group was concerned with the details of shipping and with the improvement of traffic and facilities.

C. ADMINISTRATION

1. This question is not strictly applicable, since the governmental policy was one of restricting rather than expanding transport facilities and enterprises. For specific information see the relevant sections of this report.
3. On grounds of the emergency in inland shipping caused by unrestricted competition with the railroad a cartel system was created in 1932 for the eastern German waterways, which in 1934 was extended to German shipping on the Rhine. The essentials for the laws of December 23, 1931 and June 16, 1933 called for: (a) shipping unions for the different waterways, in which individual shippers were collected for purposes of market regulation and corporate representation, (b) compulsory cartels of the larger shipping companies in specific waterways like the Elbe, (c) agreements between the organizations created under a and b on the division of custom and a coordination of resources, (d) freight committees, made up of representatives of the shipping unions, the larger shipping lines, the unloaders, and forwarders, (e) constriction of the number of ships available through an embargo on the building or reconstruction of vessels. By a decree of 1936, all shipowners, associations, and freight committees were absorbed into the Reichs-Verkehrsgruppe Binnenschifffahrt. Under the "leadership principle," the chairman of this group was appointed by the Minister of Transport, and in turn appointed all the directors of the district groups. It can be assumed that as long as the Ministry of Transport was dominated by railroad men, the interests of the Reichsbahn in tariff matters were well secured.

Concretely, the embargo on new shipping tonnage remained in effect until 1937. First, construction of unpropelled barges and tankers

PRE-WAR GERMANY - INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORTATION (C-3 CONT'D)

was permitted. On January 31, 1938 restrictions on tug boats and motor ships were lifted in time for the building of the West Wall, but lack of material prevented any real extension of the inland shipping fleet before the outbreak of war. Paradoxically, it will be recalled that inland waterways and canals were a concern of the Government.

Since the fixing of tariff rates is the single most important instrument of regulating transport competition, this question is implicitly answered in the answers to question C-2 in the study on Railway Transportation.

4. There were no peculiarities in the German administrative system of safety regulation and inspection which require enumeration here. The only difference from commonly accepted practices lay in the high degree of centralization within the Ministry of Transport.
5. Labor employed in the German inland waterways totaled about 130,000 workers, of whom approximately 95,000 were estimated to constitute persons employed on river craft. To ensure a constant supply of skilled labor trained on Nazi political lines, a 3 years' apprenticeship system was compulsorily introduced in 1938. Moreover, a "Professional Training Scheme for Inland Shipping" was set up, and in 1939 re-designated the "Reich Working Combine for Training in Inland Shipping." The "Reich Working Combine," composed jointly of representatives of the Shipping Association and of the Trade Board "Power Transport Administration" of the German Labor Front, carried out the compulsory training scheme, and selected in each river zone a suitable training center and hostel for trainees. This training was carried out under strict Nazi-party supervision.
6. As of September 1, 1938 Germany had ratified the following international transport conventions of the League of Nations, which had some bearing on inland waterway transportation: the transit conventions, ports convention, and the declaration recognizing the flag of Inland States. Germany belonged to the following international organizations concerned with inland waterway transportation:

European Commission of the Danube
International Commission of the Danube
International Elbe Commission
Central Commission on the Navigation of the Rhine.